

May 8, 2018

Dear Assessment Committee:

Please find here the Sociology/Anthropology department's response to your recent comments and rubric regarding our self-assessment last year. From these, we focused on three areas to address in this self-assessment. A major question concerned what concrete changes our department should make in response to evidence regarding student development. The three areas for consideration include: departmental learning goals, evidence of meeting them, and changes to address observed shortcomings.

We are generally happy with our learning goals, but do not dispute the inevitable possibility of refinement. But, we have spent many years developing our current learning goals, revisiting them at every annual retreat and keeping them published on our website. It is worth noting that the college's Vision for Student Learning follows from our departmental goals, which were in turn held up by Associate Provost Sutherland in earlier assessments as a model for mapping to the college's goals.

Nonetheless, we can do a better job of collecting and using evidence for how well students meet our learning goals. Following your advice to develop better direct evidence, we propose to use the attached rubric as a guide to our annual discussion of senior capstones. We hope this instrument will help more directly assess how well our students are meeting learning goals. Some learning goals, such as engaging in a lifelong search for meaning, may not be amenable to direct measurement, but for others this feedback may help us evaluate and adjust our learning goals in the future.

Based on existing data from two years of indirect evidence by senior surveys, we currently recognize one significant shortcoming in student development related to at least three of our learning goals. The two major areas of concern in the surveys regarded the size of our department and departmental opportunities. The problem of size remains beyond present scope, but departmental opportunities are an area we have begun to address. Research, internships, and service learning are opportunities relevant to learning goal #4 on methods, #8 on citizenship/community participation, and #11 on the world beyond Hendrix. We are all currently developing opportunities for students to address these three learning goals better.

Professor Čapek is using development funds from her Elbert L. Fausett Distinguished Professorship to support a student doing a bibliographical search and a literature review of environmental justice research. Professor Goldberg is beginning an Odyssey Professorship next year, in which she and Professor Peszka will work with a research group of Anthropology and Psychology students, teach a mixed methods course, and take students into the field to conduct research that they helped to design. Professor Schwartzkopf is using his current Odyssey Professorship on Material Culture and Everyday Life to support student research on the relationship between people and things. His project will support six student projects, and travel to London and Guatemala. Professor Miyawaki is using his ACS Microaggression and Microaffirmation project to

support student research, and is working with a student on an Odyssey project to examine racial identity of children in mixed marriage families. Professor Hill is using his Heritage Odyssey Professorship to support numerous students' travel and participation in professional development and service learning at museums and other heritage sites in Arkansas, Arizona, Washington DC, New York, and the UK.

In the coming year we will continue to promote these and other opportunities to our students in hopes that they find improvement in this aspect of their development. We will also look forward to using our new capstone rubric to assess how well students meet learning goals. Finally, at our August retreat we will explore the idea of developing a template for effective vocational and experiential learning.